

Deuteronomy = DUE-tuh-RAHN-uh-mih

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

Moses spoke to the people:

“May you and your children and your children’s children  
fear the Lord your God all the days of your life,

and keep all his decrees

and his commandments that I am commanding you,

so that your days may be long.

Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe them thoroughly,

so that it may go well with you,

and so that you may multiply greatly in a land

flowing with milk and honey,

as the Lord, the God of your Fathers, has promised you.

Hear, O Israel:

The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,

and with all your soul, and with all your might.

Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart.”

PAUSE for **THREE** seconds

then look up at the people

and say SLOWLY:



The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.

Pause – and look up at the assembly

The priests of the first covenant were many in number,  
because they were prevented by death from continuing in office;  
but Jesus holds his priesthood permanently,  
because he continues forever.  
Consequently he is able for all time  
to save those who approach God through him,  
since he always lives to make intercession for them.  
For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest,  
holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners,  
and exalted above the heavens.  
Unlike the other high priests,  
he has no need to offer sacrifices day after day,  
first for his own sins,  
and then for those of the people;  
this he did once for all when he offered himself.  
For the law appoints as high priests  
those who are subject to weakness,  
but the word of the oath,  
which came later than the law,  
appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.



Pause for **THREE** seconds  
then look up at the people  
and say SLOWLY:

The WORD of the LORD.

*Thanks be to God.*

## GOSPEL READING – 31 B

The Lord be with you.

*And with your spirit.*

A reading from the holy gospel according to Mark.

*Glory to you, O Lord.*

One of the scribes came near  
and heard them disputing with one another,  
and seeing that Jesus answered them well,  
he asked him,  
“Which commandment is the first of all?”  
Jesus answered, “The first is,  
‘Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one;  
you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
and with all your soul, and with all your mind,  
and with all your strength.’  
The second is this,  
‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’  
There is no other commandment greater than these.”  
Then the scribe said to him,  
“You are right, Teacher;  
you have truly said that ‘he is one, and besides him there is no other’;  
and ‘to love him with all the heart,  
and with all the understanding,  
and with all the strength,’  
and ‘to love one’s neighbour as oneself,’ —  
this is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”  
When Jesus saw that the scribe answered wisely,  
he said to him,  
“You are not far from the kingdom of God.”  
After that no one dared to ask Jesus any question.



The GOSPEL of the LORD.

*Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

## SCRIPTURES IN DEPTH

### Reading I: Deuteronomy 6: 2-6

The first paragraph of this reading forms an introduction. Israel is entering the Promised Land, and its side of the covenant is to keep the law of God from generation to generation.

The second paragraph consists of the Shema, which became the daily Jewish prayer. God is to be loved in response to his prior revelation of himself as the one God.

That divine unity was revealed through the Exodus event and, for the Deuteronomist, through the perpetual accessibility to his presence at the one central sanctuary. To love in this context means to trust solely in him and to reject the many gods of the heathens.

In Hebraic thought, heart, soul, and strength do not mean separate human faculties but the person in the totality of his/her being. Thus, the radical nature of God's claim on Israelite obedience is emphasized.

### Responsorial Psalm: 18:2-3, 3-4, 47, 51

Psalm 18 is one of the royal psalms (note the third stanza), possibly going back to David. It is a thanksgiving for victory in battle. The refrain, taken from the first verse, forms an admirable response to the Shema.

### Reading II: Hebrews 7:23-28

Having established the qualifications of Jesus to be high priest, the author at last embarks upon an exposition of his main theological theme. It consists of a point-by-point comparison of Jesus with the Levitical priests of the old covenant, demonstrating that at each point Jesus and the effect of his work are superior to them and the effects of their work. These are the main points of comparison in this excerpt:

Levitical Priest

Christ

many

only one

impermanent

eternal

subject to death

alive forever

sinner—had to offer for himself

sinless—no need to offer for himself

repeated sacrifices

once-for-all sacrifice

appointed by law

appointed by oath superseding law

### Gospel: Mark 10:35-45 (long form); 10:42-45 (short form)

The double commandment of love had a triple attestation. In Mark it is presented in a Hellenized form. The Shema is directed against pagan polytheism.

The addition of mind/understanding to the list of faculties brings out the meaning of the Hebrew word for "heart" (lebab), which was the organ of intellectual activity, while the higher value placed on ethical obedience as contrasted with sacrificial cultus is typical of Hellenistic Judaism.

Matthew's form lacks these features, and it is couched in a highly Semitic Greek. Hence it looks more primitive than Mark's.

Luke's form, in our opinion, is an adaptation of the Marcan form and serves as an introduction to the parable of the Good Samaritan.

There has been much discussion about whether the double commandment is original with Jesus. Actually it is a combination of two different Old Testament passages, Deut 6 and Lev 19, so its contents cannot be regarded as original in themselves. But what about the combination of the two commandments, and what about their use as a summary of the whole Torah?

The idea of summarizing the Torah under a single basic commandment was not unknown to rabbinic Judaism, which occasionally used the commandment to love one's neighbor in this way. But the rabbis never combined this commandment with the commandment to love God.

However, the combination is found several times in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, and there are other hints of it in the writings of Hellenistic Judaism. In fact, it seems to be characteristic of Jewish wisdom tradition, both Palestinian and Hellenistic. It must have been from that source that it came to Jesus.

Is there, then, anything distinctive about his use of it? Yes, for Jesus understands the interconnection between the two commandments in a quite radical sense. Love of God is illusory if it does not issue in love of neighbor, and love of neighbor is refined self-love if it does not proceed from the love of God.

Reginald H. Fuller